Научная статья /
Research Article

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УДК 82.0
ББК 83

ПЕРФОМАНС СУБЖАНРА «ГАНДЗ» И ПОЭТИКА КАК ТАКТИКА

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Дата поступления статьи: 09 ноября 2023 г.
Дата одобрения рецензентами: 17 марта 2024 г.
Дата публикации: 25 сентября 2024 г.
https://doi.org/10.22455/2500-4247-2024-9-3-10-27

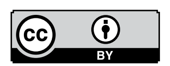
Аннотация: Цель статьи — показать одну из важных особенностей религиозной лирики — цикличность и сеть как поэтическую особенность. Ключевым субжанром в этом отношении являются произведения под названием «гандз» и составленные из них Гандзаран-антологии, рассматриваемые в контексте исторического, церковного литургического ритуала и практики, а также средневековой религиозной рутины. Сеть в этой статье относится к средствам, образам и повествованиям, передаваемым между разными жанрами и поджанрами, используемыми для одной и той же цели, которые создают парадигматический образ церковных или литургических текстов христианского средневековья. В статье анализируется динамика, действующая в сетевой системе разных текстов, и то, как характерные единицы разных текстов становятся важнейшим компонентом поэтики субжанра «гандз». Подробно рассматриваются функциональность поджанра «гандз» в литературном и социальном смысле, его исполнение, исторический контекст его возникновения и развития, его парадигматическое значение в армянской средневековой литературе, а также способы его превращения в сетевую единицу в богословском контексте. Одним из важнейших аспектов статьи является исследование взаимодействия гандза и проповеди, исходя из их схожей социальной функции.

Ключевые слова: армянская средневековая лирика, «гандз» субжанр, перфоманс жанра, календарь армянской Церкви, средневековый церковный ритуал, проповедь, цикличность, богословский контекст, поэтика средневековой религиозной поэзии.

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Для цитирования: *Харатян А.А.* Перфоманс субжанра «гандз» и поэтика как тактика // Studia Litterarum. 2024. Т. 9, № 3. С. 10–27. https://doi.org/10.22455/2500-4247-2024-9-3-10-27



Studia Litterarum,
vol. 9, no. 3, 2024

«GANDZ» SUBGENRE PERFORMANCE AND POETICS AS TACTICS

© 2024. Alla A. Kharatyan
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Received: November 09, 2023
Approved after reviewing: March 17, 2024
Date of publication: September 25, 2024

Abstract: The article aims to show one of the crucial features of religious lyrics: cyclicity and network as a poetic feature. A crucial subgenre in this regard is represented by the works called "gandz" and the Gandzaran anthologies they compose, viewed in the context of historical, ecclesiastical liturgical ritual and practice, and medieval religious life. Networking in this article refers to the means, images, and narratives transferred between different genres and subgenres used for the same purpose, which create the paradigmatic image of the liturgical texts of the Christian Middle Ages. The article analyzes the dynamics operating in the network system of different texts and how the characteristic units of different texts become the most significant component of the poetics of the "Gandz" subgenre. The article analyzes the functionality of the "gandz" subgenre in the literary and social sense, its performance, the historical context of its origin and development, its paradigmatic significance in Armenian medieval literature, and its being a network unit in the theological context. One of the crucial aspects of the article is the study of the interaction between gandz and sermon based on their similar social function.

Keywords: Armenian medieval lyric, "gandz" subgenre, genre performance, the calendar of the Armenian Church, medieval church ritual, sermon, cyclicity, theological context, the poetics of medieval religious poetry.

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For citation: Kharatyan, A.A. "'Gandz' Subgenre Performance and Poetics as Tactics." *Studia Litterarum*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2024, pp. 10–27. (In English)
https://doi.org/10.22455/2500-4247-2024-9-3-10-27

Introduction

With its phases of development, Armenian medieval lyric poetry differs from the stages of other Christian poetic cultures, starting with the creation of the Armenian alphabet in the 5th century. Christian texts, including lyric poetry[1], obtained a written form in this century.

Independent ecclesiastical poetry, intertwined with singing, originated in the Christian context within the 1st–2nd centuries. Initially, it was parallel to or often identified with psalms and scriptural hymns. But later it became independent, and, as researcher-theologian Garegin Sargisyan notes, from the 3rd century it became an important element in church worship and a valuable means of religious upbringing and priesthood education [15, p. 59]. Such lyric texts were chants (Armenian: "շարական," sharakan; English translation: Armenian chant)[2], psalms, and hymns.

In the 5th century, anthologies of poetic series compiled according to the church ritual calendar began to appear, which were new in their form in Christian culture. The first such anthologies were called sharaknots, which involved the works of Armenian chant writers according to the church ritual. The name of this type of lyric was used starting from the 9th–10th centuries, before that it was called "attachment" (Armenian: "կցորդ" — "Ktsord" or "Ktsourd"), emphasizing in the name that they are attached to psalms as church songs and are performed

1 Of course, the word *lyrics* in its theoretical sense came into use from the 16th century; here, however, it is used to indicate the type of the verse.

2 In Armenian philology, the origin of the name of this poetic genre is explained by the combination of the Armenian word "շար" *(English: row, series)* and the suffix "-ական" *(English: -tion)* (M. Abeghyan, St. Malkhasyan, Hr. Acharyan). It has also been associated with the Armenian version of the Assyrian root word "sher."

after the psalms. This lyric type was not the only one, in the 10th century another type, called “gandz,” appeared, with which, starting from the 12th century, another anthology corresponding to the church calendar was compiled: it was called “gandzaran.” In the case of both anthologies, the important thing was not to violate the church ritual calendar, and the anthology was compiled not to reflect the author’s creative signature, but to ensure that the works follow the order of the holidays in the calendar. In other words, the anthology genuinely reflected the Calendar of the Armenian Church. Unlike the sharaknots, however, in which the authors are not mentioned, but are clarified later, the authors are mentioned in the gandzaran with poetic tricks, which will be discussed later.

The Aims and Objectives of the Article

The article aims to show one of the fundamental features of religious lyric poetry: cyclicity and network as poetic features. In this term, the so-called gandz works and the gandzaran anthologies are the crucial subgenres, viewed historically, in the context of ecclesiastical, liturgical rituals and practice, and medieval religious routine.

This approach is used in modern studies of medieval Christian lyrics. For example, **Insgrid Nelson**, an English literature researcher, studies medieval English lyric poetry based on **Ardis Butterfield’s** “**network and cliché theory**[3],” also an important feature of Eastern Christian and particularly Armenian medieval liturgical poetic anthologies. Based on English and Anglo-French medieval texts, Butterfield concludes that they tend to reuse and circulate clichés that may come from lyric or nonlyric contexts, such as sermons. These clichés are generative and creative; they are an important component of medieval lyric form that encourages a different reading of the model than the new formalist paradigm of reading [5, p. 31]. This is an important feature because the foundation of his proposed “network” is theology, which ensures inter- and intradisciplinary ideological and image repetitions and transfers between different texts. The main reason for this is that the clichés, as we know it today, were not realized in the Middle Ages, which was conditioned by the realization of the absolute, which, in turn, was conditioned by the theological perceptions of the time. In this sense, genre content and form transfers took place in medieval texts, and its rigid system was

3 Butterfield’s term “network” is very similar to intertextuality, but it does not only indicate units transferred from text to text but also a common web woven together by all.

created based on universal theological perceptions. It is noteworthy that the sermon genre mentioned among many examples, from which image and pragmatic clichés are borrowed, is also one of the most significant genres for the formation and application of the gandz subgenre that is the basis of this article. We believe that this theory of network is generally typical of medieval religious texts, conditioned by the cultural code: religious texts were an indicator of identity, and they had to be unique and generative in a specific cultural and social life, thus creating a network system between all lyric and nonlyric texts with religious content. It forms a "universal model" of a unified image of world perception and interpretation, a theological system reflecting the global vision of the world from a communal perspective, as theoretically characterized by Umberto Eco [1, c. 516].

The study of anthologies formed in Armenian medieval literature provides a vivid and impressive picture of that network model. What do I mean by that, and in what sense am I going to apply it? In this article, a network refers to the means, images, and narratives used for the same purpose and transferred between different genres and subgenres, which create the paradigmatic image of the ecclesiastical or liturgical texts of the Christian Middle Ages.

This network system makes it clear that there is no hierarchical principle between genres, so they are connected by form-content units, which are in endless movement, giving and taking units from each other.

My objective is to show the dynamics existing in the network system of different texts and how they become a significant component of the poetics of the gandz subgenre.

Hence, we will study the functionality of the gandz in the literary and social sense, its performance, the historical context of its origin and development, its paradigmatic importance in Armenian medieval literature, and its being a network unit.

Gandz as a Subgenre. Historical Overview

Manuk Abeghyan, the fundamental researcher of Armenian medieval literature, who is also the founder of the study of the history and the phasing of Armenian literature, treats this religious part of the lyric with some cynicism paying no special attention to it. He titles the history of Armenian poetry starting from the 11th century "Growth of the Secular Spirit" and examines only that aspect of literature — the newly noted secular manifestations [9]. Therefore, he did not pay

attention to the medieval poems called gandz and their anthologies, which, however, were studied separately, as isolated phenomena, only by those studying the Middle Ages, again without considering them within the big model.

It is difficult to say what the equivalent of the medieval Armenian poem called gandz is in the pan-Christian context. There are two different opinions in Armenian philology regarding the origin and development of this subgenre. Some claim that it is a genuine Armenian reality, and the situational reality defined by its name, "the great sermons that were solemnly performed in the morning and the evening right after the psalms are called gandz..." The name gandz was used accidentally because Saint Grigor Narekatsi wrote the first great sermons in the given form and meaning to compose the beginnings of the verses with his initials, always started the three sermons with the letter G and the word "gandz," after that such sermons were called gandz [17, p. 97].

Theologian Mkrtich Poturyan, another Armenian philologist, states that the word "gandz" was used in the sense of a song. He thinks it is a separate genre that entered the Armenian Church lyric under the influence of the Roman Church, as a borrowing from Latin, where there are songs called "canticum," which have the style of the Armenian gandzes. Linguistically, he explains it as follows, "the most closely related to the word gandz (song) and its best interpretation, in my opinion, are the Gaelic 'Chanson' and the Italian 'Canzone' words, which have the same meaning" [14, p. 558].

Gandz, as a new poetic type, originated in the 10th–12th centuries. This poetic type had stages of origination, development, and extinction: A. Keoshkerian mentions three historical stages of the development of the Gandzaran culture: origination (10th–12th centuries), flourishing (13th–16th centuries) and extinction (17th–18th centuries) [16, p. 16]. Gandz was a result of some historical realities. It originated and developed naturally as a requirement of social life. The historical period stood out for difficult situations with Seljuk Turk, and Mongol-Tatar invasions, accompanied by religious and denominational issues. These, in their turn, play a serious role in the formation of specific poetics.

Gandz Internal and External Structure as an Expression of Network

a) **External structure**

The network phenomenon is first of all expressed in the gandz structure. The gandzaran canon, according to Armenian medievalists, consists of three units:

the gandz (also known as the sermon), the song ("*tagh*," Armenian "տաղ"), and the change ("*pokh*," Armenian "փոխ," written to sign that the given part should be sung in a faster way) or faster melody ("*hordorak*," Armenian "հորդորակ," similar to allegro). The title of the verse, hordorak, indicates that this part of the canon should be sung in a faster voice to distinguish it from the preceding tagh (song) part with the vocal performance. According to A. Kyoshkeryan, the part called melody is also a part of gandz [16, p. 37]. However, in my opinion, it is the same tagh, which has different names in different manuscripts: in one case — tagh, in another — melody. These are the parts that are sung and have dedicated musical notations in the manuscript.

These parts included in the gandz canon are units that may appear not only in the gandz canon as an external unit related to gandz but also in other systems different from poetry. The comparison of old manuscripts indicates that the taghs are separate units, and other anthologies were made with them; moreover, gandz and tagh are works of different authors. The same can be said about the parts called "hordorak" or "change." Those are sung verses that are included not only in the gandz canon but also in the church calendar canon without following gandz, as it happens in the gandz anthologies. For example, in the multi-component canon of Epiphany, there are the following mandatory components: The Gospel of Luke 2: 8–14; sermon — Holy Mother; Prayer — Grateful to You, Holy God; Armenian chant — Great Mystery, and other chants; attachment and changes. Based on the same principle of network, the changes and tagh-melodies corresponding to the given holiday are included in the gandzaran canon, forming a gandzaran anthology. This means that based on their application, subgenre units are used in different medieval performance paradigms, reinterpreting or supplementing this or that aspect. It should also be noted that not all gandzes in gandz anthologies will have all these canonical units. Very often in anthologies, the gandz appears without the other units, which makes me assume that they are not a mandatory part of the gandz canon but a mandatory aspect of the church calendar canon, and since gandz is a unit of the church ritual, it may sometimes have this and other calendar units attached to it.

b) **Internal structure**

This type of poem has no clear volume — it usually has as many verses as the number of letters in the author's name, and each verse starts with one letter of the author's name, keeping the form of an acrostic. In the internal structure,

i. e. inside the canon, the gandzes have the following smaller textual units: odes, glory, prayer, wish, etc. In this sense, it creates a textual link with another spiritual type known in medieval Armenian lyric — sharakan. On the other hand, the internal content is the relevant text of the given church calendar ritual, with poetic description, taken either from the Bible or other religious texts.

To get a clear understanding of the performance value of the gandz appearing in the global model, or about its network, and what it borrows from other genres in the theological model of medieval thinking, as well as what it gives to that theology, we should consider the position of the gandz in the church ritual system. But for this, we should first of all consider the time.

Why does gandz, in the form of poetic verse with pure religious content, experience fierce development and prosperity? If we consider the development of this type of poem in the context of its historical period, which, as a reality of the time, could not leave the time un-responded, then it becomes clear that it was a product of its time. Time conditions any reality formed in its paradigm, and gandz, as a dominant poetic type, was not an exception. The time is directly reflected in the gandz: in their texts, the gandz-writers address God, the Holy Trinity, or Intercessor Mary to save or protect the Armenian World from the enemy, to reduce evils, and to solve the problems of the homeland. For example, in his *Gandz on Holy Nativity and Sermon* (aka Nativity Sermon), the 13th century gandz-writer Mkrtich appeals to the Mother of God for the motherland issues.

> We beg you, unmarried Mother / ask Christ for peace in the world for us / and to free us from the lawless //. May the Lord give life to our patriarch... // May the Lord help our king — let him be victorious in wars[4].

The historical contextual framework created by the research sources of the given period — the memoirs and Armenian historical works, is determined by the attacks of foreign conquerors and denominational issues: loss of Armenian statehood and Seljuk Turk, Mongol-Tatar invasions. During this period, religion was an inseparable part of the national identity, so it was from the denominational point of view. In the modern world, religion as an identity component is rather controversial. In the Middle Ages, however, it was a clear indicator of identity.

4 Gandzaran, Venice, Mekhitarist Library (San Lazzaro degli Armeni), MS1335, 1371, 31v–33r.

In the historical testimonies cited below, considerable information is provided about those issues, which leads to the conclusion of how important the issue of religious identity was, which supports the need to focus and strengthen religious ideas in the text, which would contribute to the dissemination and strengthening of those ideas among the public.

In this context, the poem becomes an essential tool for preaching the word of God and the order of the church.

The Byzantine scholar Hr. Bartikyan mentions the serious religious risks, "The emigration of Armenians to the eastern states of the empire strengthened the opponents of the official religion even more. This worried Byzantium and they did not miss an opportunity to interfere in the religious affairs of Armenians, persecuting them" [12, p. VIII]. Armenian chronicler Matthew of Edessa (11th century) provides extensive information on this, voicing the religious issues on behalf of King Gagik during the meeting with Emperor Tukits in Constantinople, with this he justifies the approaches of the Armenian religion [12, p. 108–117].

Gandzes and spiritual taghs developed during the period when the country was endlessly conquered by the Muslim peoples, Armenia lost its statehood, and the Church was the power to preserve and unify the country. Religion was no less of a problem — the Unitary movement in the country caused by the crusade was especially a cause for concern. In this case, the written thought focused on such issues, additionally, the fact that the churchmen themselves created written pieces cannot be ignored. And since religion was felt threatened in various ways by foreign conquerors (militarily and denominationally), after losing the state, Christianity was the most significant to preserve. In this context, texts of religious content, including poems, are gaining momentum. Given this circumstance, the more substantive and functional study of gandz-sermon is given attention again.

The Performance of Gandz or the Oral Nature of the Written

As it was already discussed above, the comparison of the versions of some gandzes by Mkrtich preserved in different manuscripts shows that the same text was called **gandz** in one manuscript, and a **sermon** in another. This phenomenon is typical of not only the gandzes by Mkrtich but also the gandz genre in general. According to Armenuhi Kyoshkeryan, the proto-text of the "gandz" poetry genre is the sermon. To understand the textual and genre evolution of the sermon-gandz pair, we should consider the content-form aspect of the text with

its social function. As mentioned above, the historical context endows the works of the time with its characteristic functionality, and this historical context allows us to conclude with the course of the genre's development.

A. Kyoshkeryan writes about the similarities between sermon and gandz: "The study shows that with their structural features, gandzes first of all can be compared with these sermons. The latter are usually smaller paragraphs starting with 'And we beg our Lord of peace,' and sometimes they have a rather extensive volume, consisting of several verses. The distinctive ending is rather noteworthy, starting with 'And unitedly...', 'For me and for all...', and ending with 'Have mercy, our Lord...' This is where the sermon-gandz interaction appears, with a feature that is characteristic of only those two spiritual works used in the church" [13, p. 17–18].

In the foreword of the two-volume "Gandzaran" Manuscript of Armenians, Vardan Devrikyan also covers in detail Kyoshkeryan's views, the summary of which is as follows:

1. Grigor Narekatsi's sermons started with the word "gandz," which is why later such poems were called gandz [11, p. 13].

2. In the early Middle Ages, sermons were the texts read aloud from the stage during the liturgy and religious service, and since 13th–14th centuries, the speech addressed to the people from the church stage has been called a sermon, in which the day's holiday and its spiritual message together with the problems of modern life were presented [11, p. 14].

Archbishop Malachia Ormanyan believes that bigger sermons are called gandz and "...are solemnly sung in the mornings and evenings after the melodies and before the prayers 'Let us be pleased with you' and 'Message from the Voice'." [17, p. 97].

Another philologist, Mkrtich Poturean, believes that gandzes have nothing to do with the sermon and are just songs called so.

"As a rule, in the beginning, the gandz was called **sermon**, which literally means herald, announcer. Sermons have a very ancient origin. The samples that have reached us are known by the names of Gregory the Illuminator, Sahak Partev, Hovhan Mandakuny, some fragments have been preserved from the first centuries of Christianity. The sermon is the deacon's prayer, addressed to the people, 'The deacon's message as a herald during the liturgy,' where saints, bishops and others are mentioned" [13, p. 17]. Armenuhi Kyoshkeryan aptly mentions this

and unfortunately leaves it discontinued, but this is an important basis for understanding the functionality, performance, and the purpose of the text, therefore, also the development trends of the genre.

Dictionaries provide the following explanations for the word *sermon*: "1. Herald, who *loudly* announced the government's orders or official news in the squares. 2. The announcement of a preacher, a *loud* statement, the announcement of the authority's order. 3. What the deacon says in the church, as an order, as a command. 4. The performance of a priest or a high-ranking clerk in the church, in which they explain religious issues to the believers" (emphasis is mine. — *A.Kh.*) [10, p. 491]. In this literal interpretation of the sermon, there are two important messages for the researcher — the speech uttered aloud, the word from the top (that of the authority or the clergy), in this case, the word of the clergy as the voice of God, and the presence of the listener or the people. For the medieval worldview, this is exclusive speech unilaterally addressed to the people, from top to bottom, that is, the presence of listeners is an important prerequisite for the valuation of speech. In this case, the essence of speech — the form and content — are brought to the fore, which must be shaped according to accessibility to be accessible and perform its function. If we consider again the explanation of the notion of "sermon," then we should conclude that as a result of the transition from the genre of the sermon to its later form — the gandz, it remains the same in terms of content, but is different in terms of form (not only from prose form to poetry but also bigger in volume), which however, in its turn, was a semantic-pragmatic change, because the basis of the transformation from a sermon text to a poetic-singing text is the clarity of the speech to the public — it had to be understandable and comprehensible to be powerful. Regarding the Armenian chants, Garegin Sargisian also writes about making the text more powerful through singing: "Various episodes of the life of Christ are presented there with wonderful images, and with such a bright liveliness, with an emphasis on the lived message, that the reader, but especially the singer, impresses the listener much strongly due to the simple, unadorned presentation of the Gospel" [15, p. 70–71].

The German researcher Maximilian Diesenberger writes about the sermon genre and that the content of the sermon in the early Middle Ages was often insufficient to convince an educated audience; the clear and canonic speech was imperative, due to which, for example, in the Western church, the sermon changes, becoming more understandable to the people.

Having no intention to identify these two genres that became independent still in the Middle Ages, let's try to understand the functional role that these two genres have, from which their ritual character derives.

From the literary studies viewpoint, the primary function of any text is to ensure a certain connection between the existing *text* and its *reader*, the *relationship* created between them, and the *essence of that relationship*. In the case of sermons and gandzes, to reach the reader the text is spoken aloud: it is read so that the listeners can hear and therefore be **convinced**. What the recipient of the text perceives from the text has a closed structure in the Middle Ages, that is, the message should reach the reader-listener in the way the speaker expects to deliver certain religious ideas in a specific social environment. Both the gandz and the sermon are important components of medieval communication culture (in modern terms — media culture) and have a very important common feature in the way their function is realized. It is the speech that sounds out loud. In both of these texts, the speech is the primary form of communication between the sender and the receiver, because the present listener is controlled through the speech, and the same text in a written form — secondary, which is sent to the receiver without the addressee's corresponding reaction. In both texts, the sender has a strategy to deliver the religious message, and they control the listener's perception and cognition through speech. It is clear that in the Middle Ages, writing as a text was not an available medium for society. And as texts ensuring important communication with society, they were realized through a speech delivered aloud. It is obvious that these texts are not purely literary texts, because the requirement for their existence was both written and oral presentation, and their performance: simply due to the inaccessibility of the written culture, written texts were considered more elite for a specific time. In the case of the written form, it also has the ability to move in time, with a lesser social function in a given period, and later on, it was determined by the meaning of those texts if the meaning continued to be significant, they continued to be written. The "Gandzaran" collections are compiled and phrased only in a specific period, later due to their being expired for that specific period, they lose their relevance. The oral existence of the text enables to control a specific consciousness only in a specific environment, therefore, the texts that sound orally have a dominant communicative role in time and are oversocialized. "A person writes differently than he/she speaks, yes, it was much more crucial in the Middle Ages than today because at that time the culture of writing had only

a limited dominance," writes the German researcher Kurt Ruh about the oral role of the sermon genre, of course, being sure that the same text has two mandatory forms of presentation with more and lesser social function. Western researchers of the sermon also highlight the role of oral speech as an important means of strong communication with the believer. Albert Damblon, for example, believes that the spoken word encourages the present listener to think with him, due to which the written word is "unrelated to the situation, stylistically complex, having a weak contact with the addressee" [2, S. 39]. Oral speech, therefore, is "attractive" — it has qualities that written speech does not have. However, the poetic form in this case has both manifestations, with one important feature: it was also written to be sung, that is, it also had a performance function.

The reading and comparison of sermon texts of different centuries and periods show that sermon texts have content repetition, that is, one of their important features is the update and modernization of old content. In the gandzes, this modernization takes place not only by presenting scriptural or other Christian motifs in a new way but also by relating that content to the issues of the time, as is done at the end of the gandzes by mentioning the problems of the motherland, religious and secular leaders, that is, becoming the inherent part of the church ceremony through a ritual, as in the quoted passage below:

> Praying to the immortal king, // to give us unshakable peace. // More than that, for my Armenian tribe, // who exist in the world with hardship. <...> For my people to be united // to deserve Your mercy (*Gandz on the Ascension of Christ*[5]).

Gandz is the literalization of the sermon in the content and pragmatics comparison, turning from the oral into the written text, the sermon, in addition to communication (medianess), also receives a new functionality: to be read aloud, to sustain and to be continuously conveyed, that is, unlike other literary genres, it has a broader performance function.

A comparison of the gandz and the sermons reveals the following features of sameness and similarity:

1. theologically rich in content (each gandz is a reference to a biblical or Christian event);

5 Gandzaran, Venice, Mekhitarist Library (San Lazzaro degli Armeni), MS382, 1394, 139r–140v.

2. appropriate for communication (gandzes in church rituals are addressed to all Christians);

3. are performative-applicative (they are an important component of the church ceremony system);

4. are impactful (impact the consciousness and cognition of the public participating in the ceremony);

5. linguistically well-thought to be attractive (with a clear and universally accessible linguistic approach, with an immediacy that promotes the imagination based on the relevant texts);

6. in an original way (poetic form and during church service: orality and melody).

According to Silvia Serventi, in the Western church, visualization helped the sermons to be delivered quickly and correctly [7, S. 197–222]. Since the gandzes, as texts of religious content, maintain the preaching nature, in their case orality and singing support their correct realization. In this way, the content of the sermon (religious knowledge, ethics, instructions for action and conduct) can not only be memorized and reproduced, but also applied (through repetition or through the link with other images), and become common to the public, and be combined with other elements of the ritual forming an entire holiday.

In the Western church, the icons played a similar role, and being an inherent part of the church decoration, supplemented the believer's knowledge in terms of content. They are part of conveying faith, which is based on the diverse use of icons and medieval faith [8, S. 17]. In the Armenian church, the main means of communication with the believer was the spoken word, which could also turn into singing. It took on all this imagery, and the impressiveness was conveyed through a poeticized text, which, as can be seen from the original of the gandzes, was made accessible and simple, which was essential from the point of view of public access. Simplicity and accessibility refer not only to the language of the text, with the transition from complex old Armenian (grabar) to Middle Ages Armenian, but also based on texts of serious theological and philosophical complexity, a church narrative was created, written in simple language. On the other hand, the written texts remained the reading of the medieval elite — the priests, whereas the common people were ignorant of the contents of the books. This is where the demand for orality arises and the form of application of the written text — gandz, becomes orality (seemingly oral texts) or performance. That is the

communication based on the written text was carried out with the help of the voice (reading or singing)[6].

All the above-mentioned come to prove that the texts of preaching nature started to gradually gain a different form of parallel existence. They were further adapted over time. In this regard, the fact that the gandzes were edited more freely than, e. g., other poetic texts, which did not carry any theological narrative, is rather interesting. Each writer-transcriber added his/her own taste and poetic approach, adapting the word-image perceptions, rhythm, and rhyme of the poetic verse. In different versions, there are even longer and shorter verses, a phenomenon that is again an individual call of the poetic perception of the text.

The comparisons and the functional similarities or sameness of the two genres allow us to conclude that essentially the preaching content becomes a poem with its role and functionality. Sermon theorists explain society's demand for sermons with the relationship between the assumed abilities of the past and the present demands, which has determined the status of preaching in society at all times [3, S. 130], and which is always adapted to the listeners.

Gandzes, as a way of communicating with society, aim at proposing and reminding society about religious values, as well as keeping them within the framework of religious values. In this sense, the gandzaran system, which covers the entire church calendar, is an effective mechanism for reformulating and delivering religious values in a poetic form. "Through rituals, people develop their ideas about political institutions and the qualities of political leaders. Their political understanding is achieved through symbols and rituals, and ritual as an action through which the symbolic essence is expressed, plays the role of a powerful tool through which we build up the political reality" [4, p. 75]. This very function comes to prove one of the old names of this poetic form — the sermon, which is essentially a "secondary" text in relation to the word of God: the preacher's speech about the word of God. The purpose of the sermon is to convey the meaning of God's word to people's consciousness. Such a transfer of meaning is the adaptation of the primary text (word of God) to the abilities of the human mind. As an example, let's compare one of the gandzes of the gandz-writer Mkrtich with the

6 Speaking about orality, Ursula Schaefer applies the term "vocality" based on Paul Zumthor's term "vocalité," which the author introduced to show that communication based on the written text can only be implemented with the help of the voice, which supports facial expressions and gestures. See [6, S. 114–118]. This is fully applicable to sermons as well.

biblical content, which makes it even more convincing. In the Nativity Gandz, the episode of the Holy Nativity is included in the festive Epiphany chapter, which lasts eight days and is therefore called *Eight Days of Nativity*. It includes all the festive episodes of Epiphany except for the one on the circumcision — the birth of Jesus in a manger in the cave of Bethlehem (it is the praise of Mary with biblical and religious patterns because the absolute is not subject to change and the essence of the ritual is to reproduce it as a memory). The means of imagery are the same as those of all medieval religious texts, especially Armenian chants and psalms; *pure and spotless Mary, the Immaculate Conception, the desired paradise, the tree of immortality*, etc. The Holy Nativity is described, which is reminiscent of medieval images of visual art: the Worship by the Shepherds, the Annunciation of the Archangel Gabriel, the Worship by the Magi, the Baptism in the Jordan, the Descent of the Holy Spirit.

The K-beginning verse of the Nativity Gandz (the poem has as many verses as the number of letters in the author's name, and each house begins with a letter of the name) has various versions, in the earliest manuscript, which is the basis of the original of this book, the shepherds see the birth of Christ and go to worship him and gift a lamb to the heavenly holy king and praise the angels. In a different version, the archangel descends and announces the good news to the shepherds, and they go to worship Christ and praise the angels[7].

The scene of the Worship by the Shepherds is one of the important episodes of Holy Nativity, which is described in the Gospel of Luke. In theology, this scene is usually divided into two scenes: the announcement of the Archangel Gabriel to the shepherds and the worship itself. In the earliest preserved text, the scene of the announcement itself is missing to be edited in a later text.

> *// The Heavenly Father descended from heaven to announce the good news to the shepherds. // The shepherds came to worship, gifted milk and a lamb. // They were united with the angels and glorified the Lord Most High //* (Luke 2: 8–14).

Another example, the Purification holiday (Arm: Tyarnendaraj, "Տյառնընդառաջ") symbolizes accepting the Lord in the hearts of Christians by going towards the Lord. The gandz preaches the power of the Holy Trinity, the

7 Mashtots, The Armenian manuscript library of the Mkhitaryan Congregation in Vienna, MS600, 1440, 187r–191v.

genuineness of God, the sinfulness of Adam, the forty-day sanctification of Christ and his entry into Jerusalem, and the fulfillment of the Bible.

> *He appeared in a manger covered in sackcloth / and was fed with virgin milk, / Forty days later he came to the temple // and fulfilled the Bible, /* He took a pair of turtledoves from Joseph and gifted two young pigeons. They stood before baby Jesus / as per the law of Moses. / The city of Jerusalem rumbled / on the occasion of the coming of the Lord.

The entire verse poeticizes the episode of Tyarnendaraj described in Luke's Gospel: [Luke 2: 22–24].

Conclusion

From the above-mentioned, the following patterns characteristic of the poetics of the gandz can be concluded:

The genre of gandz is a significant component of the medieval theological global model in Armenian lyric poetry and its essence can be understood and analyzed only in that context. It is an important network chain, which borrows not only well-known theological clichés in the sense of imagery but also units and elements of different genres and acts as a unit to complement their content.

An important feature of the gandz is its performance, it was created and developed in accordance with the church calendar, being included in it and playing a significant role in the enrichment of that calendar canon. It takes units from the calendar, such as tagh, melody, and change, and forms the gandz canon with them.

The gandz tactic is to theologically influence the ideological and cognitive apparatus of its recipient-listener keeping them in specifically theological-national perceptions. With its performance tactics, gandz takes on the features of the sermon and acquires a paradigmatic role in Armenian medieval literature.

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